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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 07/16/09

Index:

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials
- 3) Prime Minister's daily schedule (Nikkei)

Aso government in disarray:

- 4) Aso cabinet ministers, Yosano and Ishiba, join one-third of LDP lawmakers calling for meeting on election failure that might lead to Aso's stepping down (Tokyo Shimbun)
- 5) Aso Cabinet in state of confusion following Prime Minister's abrupt declaration of Diet dissolution while staying in office (Nikkei)
- 6) Internet poll shows public's dissatisfaction with Aso's decision to dissolve the Diet (Yomiuri)

Democratic Party of Japan in action:

- 7) DPJ sets outline of manifesto for election campaign (Nikkei)
- 8) Outline of main points in DPJ's campaign promises (Nikkei)
- 9) DPJ explains why it refuses to deliberate on the cargo-search bill in the Upper House (Yomiuri)
- 10) Objections rise to scrapping of the cargo-inspection bill due to election fever (Tokyo Shimbun)
- 11) DPJ President Hatoyama calls for talks on the issue of nuclear deterrence (Yomiuri)
- 12) Hatoyama says it is possible to review the three non-nuclear principles (Sankei)

Defense and security affairs:

- 13) On 50th anniversary of the security treaty next year, possibility arises of a new U.S.-Japan security declaration expanding the scope of the alliance (Tokyo Shimbun)
- 14) China sends five warships to waters near Okinotori Island for

military drill (Sankei)

15) Satoshi Morimoto to become aide to Defense Minister Hamada (Sankei)

16) Government outlines three principles that will spell out Japan's new approach to North Korea (Mainichi)

17) Parents of Japanese woman abducted to North Korea to sue TV-Asahi talk show host Tahara for stating on live TV she was "probably not alive" (Sankei)

18) Japan, China, South Korea summit meeting postponed due to fluid political situation in Japan (Nikkei)

19) Government to help Mongolia develop its uranium deposits, seeing this as way of stimulating Japanese companies to invest in that county (Nikkei)

20) Japan and Brazil to help Africa develop agricultural sector with mission scheduled to visit sites in September (Yomiuri)

Articles:

1) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi and Tokyo Shimbun:

Yosano, Ishiba sign petition for joint meeting by both chambers' LDP members

Mainichi:

TOKYO 00001620 002 OF 014

Anti-Aso LDP members collect 132 signatures for joint meeting

Yomiuri:

Yosano urges Aso to resign

Nikkei:

Toyota to provide core hybrid parts to Mazda

Sankei:

Anti-Aso LDP members collect signatures from more than one-third of LDP Diet members for joint meeting

Akahata:

JCP to make all-out effort to win Lower House election

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

- (1) Good opportunity for change in Metropolitan government
- (2) More budgetary support for children's education

Mainichi:

- (1) Kirin-Suntory merger: Growth strategy urged for challenging global market
- (2) National Governors' Association awakened by "Takeshita effect"

Yomiuri:

- (1) Government labor-management deals must be transparent
- (2) How will new GM break away from being state-run company?

Nikkei:

- (1) Careful inspection needed of downside risk factors to the economy
- (2) National Governors' Association's readiness for decentralization being tested

Sankei:

- (1) China should provide Japan with convincing explanations on operations in Shirakaba (Chunxiao in Chinese) gas field
- (2) More illegal full-time union officials in the agriculture ministry?

Tokyo Shimbun:

- (1) National Governors' Association must not miss opportunity to

accelerate decentralization

(2) Come up with measures to deal with bullying in school

Akahata:

(1) Relocation of U.S. Marines to Guam: Tax burden to bring more pain caused by U.S. bases to Okinawa

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, July 15

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

July 16, 2009

10:02 Met with Venezuelan Science, Technology and Intermediary Industry Minister Chacon.

11:35 Met with Chief Cabinet Minister Kawamura.

13:02 Met with LDP Tokyo Chapter Chairman Ishihara, followed by

TOKYO 00001620 003 OF 014

Lower House member Takuji Yanagimoto. Then met with Vice Election Committee Chairman Suga.

14:14 Met with Finance Minister Yosano and Agriculture Minister Ishiba.

17:14 Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Uruma. Then award ceremony for the winners of the Japan Manufacturing Grand Prix

18:24 Celebration for the winners of the Japan Manufacturing Grand Prix. Then met with LDP General Council Chairman Sasagawa.

19:21 Met with Special Advisor to the LDP president Shimamura

19:34 Arrived at the official residence.

4) Yosano, Ishiba urge Aso to hold general meeting of all LDP lawmakers; Hidenao Nakagawa: Necessary signatures to petition meeting collected

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Full)

July 16, 2009

A fierce tug-of-war is now developing in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over the holding of a general meeting of the LDP members from both Diet chambers, a move that might lead to Prime Minister Taro Aso's resignation. An anti-Aso group yesterday strongly threatened Aso, announcing that it has collected the number of signatures required to hold the meeting. Finance Minister Kaoru Yosano and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shigeru Ishiba met yesterday afternoon with Aso and the two ministers directly urged the Prime Minister to hold the meeting. This means that the two key ministers of the Aso cabinet have distanced themselves from the Prime Minister. This is the biggest blow for Aso. The number of DPJ members breaking away from Aso will likely increase. Former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike and some Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly members held a meeting last night. They agreed to come up with a manifesto on their own and use it for the next House of Representatives election.

In their meeting with Aso, Yosano and Ishiba expressed a strong sense of crisis, saying: "The LDP will suffer a devastating loss in the general election if we do nothing." The two told Aso that he should hold a general meeting of all the LDP lawmakers to explain such matters as the LDP's crushing defeat in the Tokyo assembly poll.

Meanwhile, Hidenao Nakagawa and Tsutomu Takebe, former LDP secretaries general, who have called for Aso's resignation, have worked hard to collect signatures of more than one-third (128) of LDP Diet members, the number necessary for holding such a meeting. Nakagawa last evening told reporters that the necessary signatures were collected. They intend to submit them on the morning of July 17 to the LDP leadership.

The anti-Aso group wants to reach a consensus in the party to move up a LDP presidential election by stepping up pressure on Aso to step down at a LDP general meeting.

Asked about moves in the LDP last evening by reporters, Aso said: "Regarding the review of the Tokyo assembly election, I explained at

a meeting of the LDP Lower House members (on July 14)," indicating his reluctance to hold a general meeting.

Aso underscored that a no-confidence motion against him was voted down in the Lower House plenary session on July 14. He expressed again that he had no intention to resign as prime minister even if a

TOKYO 00001620 004 OF 014

general meeting was held. He said: "I as the prime minister who got (the lower chamber's approval) of confidence, will hear views of LDP members."

5) "Diet dissolution announcement" triggers discord in cabinet; Yosano asked for postponement

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)
July 16, 2009

Discord is spreading even in the cabinet over Prime Minister Taro Aso's announcement that he would dissolve the House of Representatives. Minister of Finance and Financial Services Kaoru Yosano, along with Agriculture Minister Shigeru Ishiba, met Aso at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) for about 40 minutes on July 15 and asked about the possibility of delaying the dissolution, but their request was rejected by the prime minister. Behind this is that in the aftermath of the crushing defeat of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election, there is persistent concern about going into the general election under Aso.

According to a number of sources, Yosano explained the situation at his constituency in the Lower House's first district of Tokyo at the meeting on July 15 and told Aso that, "The election situation is tough all over the country. If something is not done about the situation, the party will be seriously hurt." He did not talk about the timing of Diet dissolution directly, but hinted at the possibility of postponing the dissolution. The prime minister was reportedly unmoved. He said: "I will not waver again. I will definitely dissolve the Diet on July 21."

At an informal cabinet meeting on July 14, Aso explained his decision to "dissolve the Diet as soon as July 21 and hold the Lower House election on August 30." Yosano brought up the need to make an assessment of the Tokyo election, but this was not taken as an objection to Diet dissolution. It is possible that Aso, who had thought that he had obtained the approval of all the cabinet members, might have perceived as odd the opinion of Yosano, whom he trusts.

Various speculations are circulating in Nagata-cho and Kasumigaseki about the unexpected meeting by Aso, Yosano, and Ishiba, such as, "Yosano might have told (Aso) that he will not sign the Emperor's dissolution rescript," and, "Actually, he told Aso about his decision to resign as minister in order to avoid having to refuse signing the rescript." After the meeting, Yosano shut himself up at his personal office near the Diet.

Yosano is giving his support to the campaign to ask for a general meeting of LDP members of both houses of the Diet while not commenting in public on the signing of the dissolution rescript. On this issue, one aide to the prime minister said: "Anyone opposed to the date of Diet dissolution decided by the prime minister, even Mr Yosano, will be dismissed." Meanwhile, Ishiba told reporters after the meeting: "All this talk about not signing (the dissolution rescript) and handing in our resignation is not true."

When asked by reporters about the subject of the three-party meeting in the early evening of July 15, Aso said with a poker face: "I will not comment on specific individuals who come to see me."

TOKYO 00001620 005 OF 014

6) Poll: Aso "driven" to dissolve Diet, "pushed over the precipice"

Prime Minister Aso has recently aired his resolve to dissolve the House of Representatives for a general election, which is now certain to take place on Aug. 30. On this snap election, the Yomiuri Shimbun conducted a nationwide online poll of 1,000 Internet users, in which respondents were asked to name the Diet dissolution this time and give up to three free answers. Among their answers, there were such namings as "oikomare kaisan" (I'm-driven-to-dissolve-the-Diet dissolution), "gakeppuchi kaisan" (cliff-hanger dissolution), "yaburekabure kaisan" (fire-and-forget dissolution). These harsh namings, sounding bitter about Aso, accounted for more than 20 PERCENT and outnumbered all other answers.

Among other answers, there were such namings as "you'd-better-step-down-for-a-change-of-government dissolution" and "you-should-transfer-power-back-to-the-Emperor dissolution," which predicted a change in the framework of government after the general election and accounted for about 10 PERCENT. There were also more than 50 neutral-standing answers like "election-to-choose-government dissolution."

7) DPJ finalizes campaign pledges, to include child allowance

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Full)
July 16, 2009

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has finalized its manifesto (campaign pledges) for the upcoming House of Representatives election. It has included such policies as the payment of child allowance of 26,000 yen per month until the child graduates from middle school, making all expressways toll free, and the abolition of the temporary tax rates for gasoline tax and diesel fuel transaction tax. Since these policies will be given priority in budget allocation, the budget request ceilings, which are the symbol of the budget formulation process controlled by the Ministry of Finance (MOF), will be abolished.

Fourteen major policies were included in the manifesto, and the document was approved by a meeting of the party's "Next Cabinet" on the same day. The manifesto will be distributed to all candidates in the Lower House election.

8) Outline of the DPJ's manifesto

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
July 16, 2009

Following is the outline of the manifesto (campaign pledges) compiled by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on July 15:

Child allowance

Payment of 26,000 yen per month, or 312,000 yen per year, per child from birth until the child graduates from middle school; review of tax deductions for dependents (aged 0 to 15 years old) and spouses.

Free high school education

TOKYO 00001620 006 OF 014

Payment of about 120,000 yen each year for students of public high schools, as well as for students of private high schools (240,000 yen for households with an income of less than 5 million yen).

Pension records

Intensive work on the "missing pensions" in two years; simplify pension record correction process and pay out lump sum compensation.

Pension system reform

Unify all systems without exception; pensions to consist of two

components, "pension proportionate to income" and "minimum guaranteed pension"; minimum guaranteed pension will be 70,000 yen per month.

Medical service reform

Rescind the policy of reducing social welfare spending by 220 billion yen each year; maintain the employee pension hospitals and social security hospitals as public institutions.

Employment policy

Create an "assistance system for job seekers"; eligibility to participate in unemployment insurance scheme if employed for 31 days or more.

Regional autonomy

Abolish "subsidies with strings attached" and introduce "lump sum tax grants" for the local governments to use freely; abolish the local governments' share in public work projects under the direct control of the national government.

Toll-free expressways

Expressways will be made toll free in stages; government will take over debts, which are currently repaid with income from tolls; six expressway companies will be reorganized into private companies based on their area of operation.

Abolition of temporary tax rate for road-specific revenues

Abolish temporary tax rate for gasoline and other taxes, implementing a 2.5 trillion yen tax cut.

System of income compensation for farming households

Compensation for gap between production costs and selling prices; system to be introduced also for animal husbandry, forestry, and fisheries.

Global warming prevention

Reduction of greenhouse gases emission by 25 percent, compared to the 1990 level; in the long-term, reduce emission by over 60 percent by 2050.

Policies for small, mid-sized businesses

TOKYO 00001620 007 OF 014

Reduction of corporate tax rate for small and mid-sized companies to 11 percent and abolition of taxation on business owners; legislation of "charter for small and mid-sized businesses," "law on the prevention of bullying of small and mid-sized companies," and "law on the facilitation of local financing."

Reform of postal businesses

Freezing the sale of the stocks of Japan Post, Japan Post Bank, and Japan Post Insurance Company; review of the breaking up of the postal businesses into four entities.

Methods for implementing manifesto

Drastic review of budget request ceilings and implementation of budget formulation process led by politicians; suspension of unnecessary and non-urgent projects; and thorough reduction of policy cost through the elimination of the practice of amakudari (golden parachute), bidding reform, and so forth.

9) DPJ rejects calls for Diet deliberations on cargo inspection bill, citing endorsed censure motion against Prime Minister

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Upper House Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Seiji Suzuki held talks with his Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) counterpart Susumu Yanase in the Diet building yesterday. In the session, Suzuki asked the largest opposition party to respond to calls for Diet deliberations for the purpose of enacting a North Korea cargo inspection bill in the current Diet session. Yanase rejected the request, saying the Upper House has endorsed a censure motion against Prime Minister Taro Aso. Yanase criticized the ruling bloc at a press conference held after the meeting with Suzuki, saying: "The House of Representatives has endorsed the bill with the aim of maintaining that it fell through because of the DPJ. There is no need to discuss such a bill with a strong political intent."

Ahead of the Suzuki-Yanase meeting, LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Tadamori Oshima telephoned his DPJ counterpart Kenji Yamaoka and informally proposed holding secretaries general talks, but Yamaoka rejected the idea.

If the Lower House is dissolved on July 21, the cargo inspection bill will be scrapped that day.

10) Government's approach of prioritizing political situation over cargo inspection legislation - a de facto international pledge; Draws fire even from within LDP

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
July 16, 2009

Koki Miura

It has now become likely that a special measures bill allowing Japan to inspect cargo on ships traveling to and from North Korea will be scrapped when the House of Representatives is dissolved. Given the situation, the government will have to implement the latest UN Security Council sanctions resolution on North Korea by means of

TOKYO 00001620 008 OF 014

such activities as information-gathering by the Self-Defense Forces and tracking ships that are allowed under existing legislation. The country's political situation is now certain to take a heavy toll on the ship inspection legislation, which is a de facto international pledge.

Japan took the initiative in formulating the UN sanctions resolution. For this reason, Prime Minister Taro Aso has repeatedly indicated that the enactment of the ship inspection bill is Japan's obligation to the international community.

The bill cleared the Lower House on July 14 with the ruling bloc's vote, but the opposition bloc has decided to boycott all Diet deliberations after the House of Councillors endorsed a censure motion against Prime Minister Aso. The bills will go down the drain if the Prime Minister dissolves the Lower House on July 21.

The Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito called on the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) yesterday to hold talks between secretaries general to seek the DPJ's cooperation for the enactment of the bill, but the largest opposition party rejected it. Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura has criticized the DPJ, saying: "It is an important bill in terms of international cooperation. I wonder if the party, which has run away from this (bill), really has the ability to run the government."

But the stance of solely blaming the opposition camp has drawn objections from within the LDP as well. A national defense expert, for instance, harshly criticized the Prime Minister, saying that he had planned to dissolve the Lower House on July 14 (immediately after the Tokyo election).

11) Hatoyama: Discussion must be held on nuclear deterrence

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
July 16, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama made the

following comment yesterday about reports that the Japanese and U.S. governments have concluded a secret pact allowing port calls by U.S. warships carrying nuclear weapons:

"Given the situation in North Korea, we would like to reach a conclusion after discussing the matter thoroughly and openly between Japan and the United States. Discussions must be held on the question of the threat from North Korea and on the subject of America's expanded deterrence (such as its nuclear umbrella)."

Hatoyama was responding to a question from the press corps in Tokyo.

12) Hatoyama: After taking power, DPJ will review the three nonnuclear principles and discuss principle of not allowing bringing nuclear weapons into Japan with U.S.

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
July 16, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Yukio Hatoyama indicted to the press corps in Tokyo yesterday that if the DPJ takes the reins of government, the party will hold talks with the United States on the nation's three nonnuclear principles (of not producing,

TOKYO 00001620 009 OF 014

possessing, or not allowing bringing nuclear weapons into Japan), including a review of the principle of not allowing bringing nuclear weapons into Japan.

Hatoyama said this about the three principles:

"At this point, there is no reason for the United States to have vessels carrying nuclear (weapons) call at a Japanese port. In fact, the three principals have been abided by."

About a review of the principles in the future, Hatoyama also said:

"There should be discussion on the question of the threat from North Korea and on America's nuclear deterrence. A conclusion must be reached after thoroughly and openly discussing (the three nonnuclear principles) between Japan and the United States with an eye on the future."

Former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Vice President Taku Yamasaki proposed on July 9 allowing nuclear-armed U.S. ships to enter Japanese ports in order to be prepared for North Korean's nuclear threat.

The DPJ has hardly discussed this matter. Hatoyama plans to realize a review of the principles through "open discussions." But strong reactions are expected not only from the Social Democratic Party, with which the DPJ may launch a coalition government after the next House of Representatives election, but also from within the party, which includes former Japan Socialist Party members.

Hatoyama also made the following comment about reports that the Japanese government has concluded a secret pact with the United States allowing U.S. vessels carrying nuclear weapons to enter Japanese ports: "Once we take the reins of government, we would like to clarify the existence (of the secret agreement). In the process, we want to reach a conclusion about a review (of the three nonnuclear principles)."

13) Japan, U.S. to renew bilateral security declaration

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)
July 16, 2009

Japan and the United States have now decided to enter into intergovernmental consultations for a new bilateral joint declaration on security in order to meet terrorism and other global challenges. The government will start consultations with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Campbell and other U.S. officials who will arrive in Japan today. The new joint security declaration is intended to expand and strengthen the alliance between Japan and the

United States in wide-ranging areas, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella and global warming. It will embody the East Asia strategy of the Obama administration, which positions the bilateral alliance as the "cornerstone" of East Asian security.

In the consultations, the U.S. government will explain U.S. nuclear deterrent strategy. The Japanese and U.S. governments are expected to discuss antiterror measures, bilateral cooperation on missile defense (MD) shields, Japan's plan to renew its national defense program guidelines (NDPG), the U.S. Defense Department's quadrennial defense review (QDR), and U.S. force realignment in Japan. The two governments will besides exchange views on regional situations,

TOKYO 00001620 010 OF 014

including North Korea.

With the Obama administration having come into office, the United States has now changed its course of action to take active policy to combat global warming. The two governments will explore ways to beef up bilateral cooperation on this issue as well.

The Japanese and U.S. governments are going to release the new joint security declaration in 2010 when the two countries' current bilateral security pact will mark its 50th anniversary. The two governments will redefine the bilateral security alliance to meet the new security environment, such as the war on terror after 1996 when the two countries agreed on their current joint security declaration.

"This is the first round of discussions," a senior Foreign Ministry official said, "so we will exchange views on what and how to discuss."

In February this year, Japan and the United States held a summit meeting in Washington. On that occasion, President Obama noted that the Japan-U.S. alliance was the "cornerstone" of East Asian security. Obama had named Campbell, who worked out the current joint declaration under the Clinton administration, as assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

14) China conducted naval drills near Tokyo's outlying island

SANKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)
July 16, 2009

A Chinese naval fleet of five surface vessels was spotted conducting activities, believed to be military training exercises, in waters near Tokyo's Ogasawara Village island of Okinotorishima in late June, sources revealed yesterday. In the case of China's surface ships, marine research ships and ocean-going naval vessels used to be out at sea near Okinotorishima Island. However, the Chinese navy's surface ships there conducted activities, believed to be military maneuvers, for a long period of time. This is the first time that such a fact has been confirmed.

According to the Defense Ministry, the fleet of five vessels was made up of a missile destroyer, two frigates, a supply ship, and an accompanying support vessel. The five vessels entered the Pacific Ocean from the East China Sea on June 19, passing through the waters between Okinawa's main island and Miyakojima Island. After that, on June 22, the five ships were spotted in waters about 260 kilometers northeast of Okinotorishima Island. The Chinese naval fleet, when spotted, was apparently carrying out military training exercises, the ministry said. A helicopter believed to be frigate-based aircraft flew over the waters there, and the fleet took a short turn, according to the ministry.

The five Chinese naval vessels headed northwest in Pacific waters about 170 kilometers southwest of Okinawa's main island, and they are believed to have returned to the East China Sea, again passing through the waters between Okinawa's main island and Miyakojima Island. The Self-Defense Forces sent P-3C patrol aircraft and destroyers to gather intelligence.

15) Morimoto to be appointed as special advisor to defense minister

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
July 16, 2009

Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada on July 15 informally decided to appoint Takushoku University graduate school Professor Satoshi Morimoto as his special advisor, a post to be newly set up for political appointees. The appointment will be announced on August 11.

The authorized number of special advisors is up to three. However, Hamada will only appoint Morimoto. The special advisor attends meetings of a defense council (chaired by the defense minister) to be established anew as a non-permanent staff serving the minister to ensure political leadership and takes part in the defense ministry's decision making.

Satoshi Morimoto: Graduated from the Defense Academy. Entered the Air Self-Defense Force in 1965. Director of the Takushoku University Overseas Affairs Research Center and professor at its graduate school since April 2005, after serving as director of the Foreign Ministry National Security Policy Division. 68 years old. Born in Tokyo.

16) Government to propose three principles as new approach to making Six-Party Talks function effectively

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
July 16, 2009

The government decided yesterday to establish three principles as a new approach to making the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear and other issues function effectively. The three principles are: (1) Urge North Korea to proceed with the denuclearization process; (2) prevent the North from stalling for time; and (3) do not provide the North with heavy oil and other aid in batches in return for its denuclearization efforts. Japan has already obtained understanding for these principles from the U.S., South Korea, and China. The government plans to discuss future six-party negotiations with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State (for East Asia and Pacific Affairs) Kurt Campbell, who will visit Japan today.

The government's decision was revealed by several senior Foreign Ministry officials. Countries in the Six-Party Talks provided the North with heavy oil and other aid when progress was made in each stage of the denuclearization process, such as the suspension of operation of its nuclear facilities. But persons related to the Six-Party Talks share the view that the so-called principle of action for action collapsed with North Korea's second nuclear test. A senior Foreign Ministry official commented: "We would like to come up with specific measures, including a strict means to verify progress in its denuclearization efforts" in order to resume the Six-Party Talks.

17) Parents of Japanese woman abducted by North Korea to file suit against journalist Tahara for remark: "She is no longer alive"

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
July 16, 2009

Journalist Soichiro Tahara said in a TV program aired on April 25 that it has been learned that two Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea - Keiko Arimoto and Megumi Yokota - are no longer alive.

In reaction, the parents of Arimoto - her father Akihiro, 81, and her mother Kayoko, 83 - have decided to file a lawsuit against Tahara with the Kobe District Court, demanding 10 million yen in compensation for the mental damage they suffered from his remark, according to informed sources yesterday. The parents will file the case today.

According to their lawyer and other persons concerned, Tahara said

in the TV Asahi discussion program "Asamade nama Terebi:" "Because the Japanese side has negotiated with the North on the premise that the two are still alive although the other side has said that they died, no progress has been made in negotiations. Tahara further said: "The Foreign Ministry has also learned that (the two abductees) are no longer alive."

18) Political vacuum casting shadow over diplomacy; Causing postponement of Japan-China-South Korea summit, making attendance in WTO and other meetings difficult

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
July 16, 2009

With an agreement reached between the government and the ruling coalition to hold the next House of Representatives election on Aug. 30, a long-running election campaign has been effectively launched. For the time being, the government must suspend its diplomatic activities. Coordination is now underway to postpone a summit meeting of Japan, China and South Korea scheduled for late August. It might also be difficult for the relevant ministers to attend the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial to be held just after the election.

Following Prime Minister Taro Aso's announcement of the timetable for Diet dissolution, the Foreign Ministry conveyed to the Chinese government as of yesterday that Japan's participation would be difficult. The trilateral summit has been set for sometime around Aug. 30 in Tianjin, where Premier Wen Jiabao is from.

Last year, as well, a trilateral summit scheduled for Sept. 21 was put off due to then Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's resignation announcement. The Foreign Ministry aims to hold the trilateral summit by the end of this year, but events in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of China's foundation are planned for October in China. Given this, rescheduling it might not be easy.

A trilateral foreign ministerial as a preparatory meeting for the trilateral summit is scheduled for July 25, but one official said: "Now that no prospects are in sight for the summit, there is no reason to hold the foreign ministerial." The Japanese government has asked the Chinese government about whether the foreign ministerial will be held as scheduled even if the summit is postponed, but no reply has come yet.

The Foreign Ministry is also concerned about the diplomatic timetable after the election. In early September, such events have been arranged as the new round of WTO global trade talks (Doha Round), a meeting of the Major Economies Forum (MEF) to discuss global warming, and a meeting of Group of 20 (G-20) foreign ministers.

It is possible for the relevant incumbent ministers to attend international meetings to be held just after the general election

TOKYO 00001620 013 OF 014

until the next government is formed. But if the framework of the government significantly changes, the current diplomatic policy may be altered significantly. Some officials suggest that the government should bear in mind the possibility of Japanese representatives being unable to attend.

19) Japan to assist Mongolia in developing uranium

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
July 16, 2009

In a bid to help Japanese companies take part in the development of uranium in Mongolia, the government will start assisting that nation in setting up the necessary legal system for such development and extend cooperation for the development of nuclear technology as well. The government wants to pave the way for Japan procuring uranium from Mongolia, which has ample uranium reserves, in view of intensifying global competition to secure resources. Prime Minister Aso and Mongolian Prime Minister Bayar will meet on July 16 and exchange memorandums including such details.

It is believed that most of the uranium mines in Mongolia are undeveloped. Japan, which is advanced in terms of nuclear power plants, will assist Mongolia in setting up a legal system for investment and mining to create an environment in which Japanese companies can enter the business more easily. The government plans to look into providing nuclear power generation technology and funds to finance the building of infrastructure.

A substantive increase in global demand for uranium used as fuel for nuclear power generation is expected due to the construction of new nuclear power plants.

Russia has mining rights in most of Mongolia's uranium mines and is showing a desire to develop them. In reaching an agreement with Japan, the Mongolian government has presumably determined that it would be advantageous to bring in Japan's technology and funds for the purpose of checking China and Russia as well.

20) Japan along with Brazil to help African agriculture: Survey team to be dispatched in September

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Almost full)
July 16, 2009

The governments of Japan and Brazil have decided to jointly help agriculture in Africa. The aim is to expand agricultural production and make the result lead to improved food self-sufficiency in African nations. The government will dispatch a survey team to Mozambique in September this year so as to narrow down areas to be covered under the project and crops to grow.

Japan has a track record of cooperating for the development of Cerrado, arid land in Brazil, for many years and succeeded in turning the barren area into one of the largest grain-growing region in the world. Japan and Brazil will bring in the knowhow they achieved through this cooperation to Africa, where there are many unused land that can be used as farmland.

Another aim of Japan is to back Brazil, which has achieved economic influence, growing into an active donor nation.

TOKYO 00001620 014 OF 014

The scale of agriculture in Mozambique barely allows its people to be self-sufficient. It does not suffice domestic consumption. However, it has ample land. A Foreign Ministry official said, "If technology and funds are invested, the nation will be able to become a major agricultural goods producer in the future. They speak Portuguese like Brazil. Its climate is similar to that of Brazil. Mozambique is thus equipped with conditions under which Brazilian technicians can work.

Japan and Brazil will consider dispatching irrigation and soil improvement engineers to Mozambique.

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